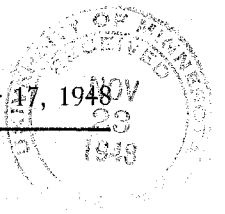
Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events November 17, 1948



By Frank C. Hanighen

While China was crashing, the voters went for Truman. It is hard to ignore this striking demonstration of the essentially isolationist attitude of the American people, although the pundits shrink from facing it. Certainly, it is evident that foreign affairs played second fiddle, putting it mildly, to domestic affairs in deciding the outcome. Even if Dewey had left his ivory tower and had pounded on the complete failure of the Roosevelt-Truman foreign policy, it may be doubted that the result would have been much different. In any case, the voters seemed happily oblivious of the fact that, in the downfall of China, the United States had suffered the most disastrous defeat of the cold war. It was a Truman defeat as well as a Roosevelt defeat. FDR sold out the Chinese Government at Yalta, and Messrs. Truman and Marshall have helped undermine Chiang Kai-shek since the end of the war. As pointed out in this column on October 27, the United States has now clearly lost all it fought for in the war against Japan. If the voters were cognizant of this, they remained undisturbed.

The disintegration of Chiang's regime is felt by some experts to mean a big shift in world power, despite assertions that our battle for Berlin has been successful in forcing the Soviets to talk peace. Moscow can afford to launch a peace offensive, can afford to talk. As one observer put it, "We have saved two million Germans temporarily, and lost 200 million Chinese permanently". Alfred Kohlberg of the America China Policy Association says that loss of China means the following: before the Chinese debacle, four fifths of the world population was on this side of the Iron Curtain; after loss of China, Japan and Southern Asia (which Kohlberg regards as the inevitable sequence) only two fifths of the world population will be on our side, the rest will be under Soviet sway or influence. It is a picture which might well prompt the heavy thinkers to review the policy not only of Truman, but also of Roosevelt, whose crusade led inexorably to this result.

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It is reported that Madame Chiang Kai-shek has a plan for salvaging something from the wreckage of China. The 'Gissima wants to give Formosa to the United States as a naval base. Formosa is a large island off the coast of China, long under the dominion of the Japanese, and it would serve as a ready refuge for the Chinese Government if all Government resistance on the mainland foundered. That the U. S. Government may have something like this in mind was seen in the dispatches on November 16: while U. S. authorities recommended that all American civilians evacuate China, Formosa was not mentioned.

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Whether or not Senator Vandenberg is getting any sleep these nights is a question rather frequently asked -- not without malice -- by Capital observers. They are thinking of him as they speculate about the future of what is amiably called our foreign policy. Will Secretary Marshall stay on? And will we continue firm with Soviet Russia? The sounds from Key West were in the affirmative this week. But, Marshall may want to leave, and there is disturbing talk of Justice Douglas in the State Department. Anyhow, events abroad may force a change in the Administration policy. Maybe Vandenberg has thought of this, too. The Senator whistled courageously at the Reserve Officers Association meeting at Philadelphia on Armistice

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Day, when he rebuked Molotov for supposing that Truman's victory was "some sort of encouraging repudiation of the bi-partisan peace aims". But the Vandenberg periods could not conceal an uneasy note.

The argument running through Capital backchat is as follows: President Truman (and/or his advisers) took up foreign policy during the last weeks of the campaign, and tried a little appeasement. In this, the President collided with Secretary Marshall, and Judge Vinson became known as "The Man Who Never Went to Moscow". In his Miami speech on October 16, the President gave the impression that he hadn't exactly changed his mind about the Vinson idea. Today, flushed with unanticipated victory Truman might screw up his courage to dispense with Marshall and then the get-tough treatment of Russia might be exchanged for a get-along-with-Russia-somehow line of policy.

But, on what bleak rock would that leave Senator Vandenberg? The Senator from Michigan, with a foresight denied to other pontiffs on matters abroad, very commendably saw the asp in the Stalin bouquet, way back in 1943 and 1944, when others didn't. Unfortunately, he allowed himself to be jockeyed into the bi-partisan, or "heads-I-lose-tails-you-win" policy. If Congressional Republicans had a coherent, independent foreign policy of their own calling for full defense and no appeasement of Russia, at least they would be in a more comfortable position today. But, instead they possess the ineffable bi-partisan business. Right now, this means being firm with perfidious Moscow. But what will it be tomorrow? It is precarious to make a deal with a weak chief executive (at least he looked that way then), under the thumb of his State Department counsellors. What happens if the "weak" man turns out to be rather self-willed, shuffles his advisers and reverses his policy? The current mellow portrait of a lofty statesman might then be replaced by a crude caricature of a man-played-for-a-sucker.

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But did the ridiculous Vinson plan appear so ridiculous to the hinterland brethren making up their minds about their ballots? There is more than a suspicion that it looked like a practicable gesture among the folks out there. In any case, the dilemma in which Mr. Vandenberg finds himself -- not to mention the Honorable Thomas E. Dewey -- becomes unbearably painful when it begins to emerge that the President won on a 100 per cent domestic affairs program. And that the victory came largely from those votes in the supposedly Republican West. The fact is that both urban Democrats and Republicans overlooked the flexible nature of the mind of the agricultural area.

Perhaps this became noticeable during the reaches of the long night when Republicans dismally realized that those "down state" votes in Illinois and Ohio were not coming in, and the Democratic city politicos blissfully opened their eyes to the fact that a lot of the down-staters weren't Republicans after all. Unobserved a lot of work on the part of Truman and his advisers had been accomplished. While Republicans (happily) and urban Democrats (unhappily) were talking about the Eisenhower who wouldn't take the Democratic crown, Truman was being set through the paces out in the sticks. The urban press saw only that Truman was making egregious verbal blunders in this Arcadian pilgrimage. They overlooked the fact that, despite these howlers, Truman was getting it over to the farmers that the Democrats had given them irrigation, public power, rural electrification and above all price supports. Truman was discarding the unintelligible language of the New Deal professors, and presenting his farm record and program in the homely dialect which the farmers could understand. Mr. Dewey kept saying such things as, "We shall not be in controversy over the basic fact that America is united against aggression", while Truman was eloquent about hogs and corn barns. That -- as many now see it -- was the way the battle was won.

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Rumors are afloat in Washington that General A. C. Wedemeyer may replace General Lucius Clay as our commander in Germany. Whether there is any foundation for these reports or not, there is need for a new deal in our German administration, as the following letter to us from an American journalist recently returned from Germany suggests. "It is of the utmost importance", says our correspondent, "that Clay should be replaced at the earliest possible moment. The poor man has an unlucky hand; it is incredible how he displeases all sorts of people for various reasons. The British and French feel that he is wholly pro-German, while the Germans still see in him the exponent of the Morgenthau idea. Also, Germans, French and British are convinced that it was he who got us into the Berlin mess by way of the ill-timed monetary reform, which they say would not have been necessary in the first place if the Americans had allowed German economy to find its own level from the start. That may be unfair to Clay. But anyhow both Western Allies and Germans are apprehensive as to his judgment of Russian intentions; it is felt that he believes too much that the Russians are bluffing.

"Whoever takes his place should clean house. He must make sure that he can rid the military government of all those people in the lower echelons and in the Nuremberg trials staff who are either Communists, fellow travellers or followers of Morgenthau. They sabotage every rational political intention we have ever voiced about Germany. Actually, on paper, our policy on Germany has been rather sound since the Byrnes speech at Stuttgart two years ago. But this policy has never been carried out because the people in the lower echelons, as well as some theoreticians on Clay's staff, have prevented its implementation."

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Even aside from the question of justice, the announcement of the conviction of and death penalty for General Tojo can scarcely be considered a brilliant stroke, coming, as it did, at the time of the Chinese disintegration. We are waging a cold war with Russia. But, the Tojo conviction actually plays right into the hands of our antagonists. It is reported that an army of Japanese military technicians, recruited from prison camps in Russia, are helping the advancing Chinese Communists. One can well imagine how the Tojo verdict makes Japanese prisoners enthusiastic collaborators of the Russians and their Allies. And what better way to kindle sympathy among the population of Japan for the old military clique, of which Tojo was a leader? Finally, and most importantly, the Tojo verdict is a travesty of justice. Again it is necessary to say that we should not be judges in our own cause.

Apropos of Tojo, Henry Regnery Company announces for early publication a volume on the war criminal trials by Montgomery Belgion (with a preface by Senator Robert A. Taft). Mr. Belgion is an English writer who has studied the famous war trials and written extensively thereon. We note in the New English Weekly, October 14, the name of Mr. Belgion, as reviewer of a book Advance to Barbarism, by a "Jurist" (Thomson and Smith). Mr. Belgion in his review has some tart remarks on "justice" (new style) and the conduct of the war trials. One passage in the review particularly interested us, as follows: "Our anonymous writer [Jurist] refers pertinently to the counsels put forward by the last of the great would-be legislators for warfare, the Swiss, Emmerich de Vatel, in his book, Le Droit des Gens ou Principes de la Loi Naturelle, published in 1758. One is that war aims should 'not be mixed up with Justice or Right or any of the great passions that move a people'. Another is that the sole valid reason for entering upon a war is in order to reach a lasting peace . . . Today it may well be argued that the flatulent assertions, from 1939 onwards, of the justice of the British cause [and the U. S. cause, as well] only served to make our rulers overlook how the war ought to end. They did not beware of the exit to their quarrel."

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Book Events

Profile of Europe, by Sam Welles. New York: Harpers. $3.50. 387 pages.. Reviewed by John Chamberlain.

A few years back, at the height of our unreciprocated romance with the Russian bear, correspondent William L. White was roundly trounced for observing that Moscow girls had sallow complexions. Some 20 or 30 fellow newspapermen ganged up on Bill White in an unprecedented group manifesto, calling him the equivalent of a dirty rat and traitor. In his Profile of Europe, Sam Welles, is a member of the staff of Time Magazine who spent ten weeks in Russia in 1947, also refers to sallow Moscow complexions, which are the result of an inferior diet. But no group denunciation of Mr. Welles has been forthcoming. We do make progress in the decencies, after all.

This is not to say, however, that Mr. Welles has been nominated for any special accolade for the habit of honest reporting of the Russian scene or the Soviet satellite States. The fellow travellers in our book reviewing world have dealt with Mr. Welles by giving him a mixture of the light brush off and the absent treatment. For my money, Profile of Europe errs in the direction of leniency towards Soviet political and military practices. But Mr. Welles is excellent when it comes to capturing atmosphere, and the many little human interest items with which he spangles his book add up to a devastating report on the soul of man under the Soviet shadow. No wonder that the fellow travellers resent the net effect of Profile of Europe.

Virtually half of Mr. Welles' pages are given over to Russia itself; the rest of the book is about Western Europe, the Mediterranean and U. S. foreign policy, with Russia never very far off stage. Hardly a war monger, Mr. Welles thinks it unlikely that Russia will dare a major conflict with the West before 1960 or 1965. He is inclined to believe that we can confine and turn back the totalitarian threat from Moscow by pursuing a firm policy and by giving Western Europe a chance to recover economically. He is under no illusions, however, that Marshall Plan money will work a miracle in a year or two -- it will, says Mr. Welles, take "perhaps more than a decade" to put Europe west of the Stettin-Trieste line back on its feet.

The fact that we are in for the long pull does not mean that Russia has any great advantage over us. As Mr. Welles says, the "frictional loss" in the Soviet social engine is huge. Recovery from the war in Russia barely exceeds that of Germany, Austria and Greece. Life in Russia, says Mr. Welles, has a static quality; on a flight from the western border to Moscow, Mr. Welles saw no automobiles and only two trains. There are no communications in the Western sense in the whole kingdom of the commissars; it takes about eight months of phone calls and telegrams to get an order filled in Russia, and even the Soviet river and canal transport has yet to catch up with the efficiency it had under the Romanoffs. Mr. Welles thinks "no nation in history has wasted on so prodigal a scale as the Soviet Union".

Mr. Welles walked five miles a day wherever he happened to be in Russia, and he succeeded in talking with people without MVD men looking on. The Russian peasant, he says, is silent but not inwardly submissive. During the war the peasants took advantage of confusion to reacquire every piece of land they could -- indeed, the Politburo discovered in 1947 that "2,255,000 cases of misappropriation of collective farm land have already been established, covering 11,750,000 acres". This doesn't look as though collectivism were an ingrained characteristic of Russian agriculture, despite the centuries of serfdom.

If Mr. Welles is correct in his emphases, the Russian peasant will outwait Communism even though it lasts for generations. The searing heat of the Russian summer makes for terrific endurance; the long winters make for infinite patience. And those who have been raised on the Russian plain can stand almost anything for as long as is necessary.

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European Supplement *to* Human Events November 17, 1948

By Bertrand de Jouvenel

The two main events in Europe so far this month have been the French Government's victory in the coal strike and the awakening of the British trade unions to the danger of Communist infiltration.

They cannot, however, compare in historic importance with the event in Asia -- the triumph of Communism in China. This event roused even the French press from its habitual indifference to happenings in the Far East.

Equally, their significance pales before the great event in the United States, which for a time left no space in our papers for anything else.

The dramatic elements in the Presidential election -- the certain "winner" knocked out, the no less certain "loser" scooping the pool -- made it a veritable coup de theatre, which must, it was felt, be of major historical importance. The meaning of the election must, in fact, be commensurate with its sensational character. But the meaning -- what is it? On that all tongues have been loosened to the exclusion of most other topics.

The possibility that Dr. Gallup's activity may have induced in Republicans a sense of cocksureness which kept them away from the polls is mentioned, if at all, only to be scouted. All Europeans are convinced that there was a significant swing of voters to the Democrats.

One widely accepted reading of the event is that in the world of "machine" politics it marks the passing of the old city machines and their replacement by those of organized Labor. The old two-party system as it has for so long functioned in the United States is now, it is said, turning into an antimony of Right and Left, such as we in Europe have long had cause to know and deplore. The event has been described to me as a long step forward in the assimilation of American to European politics, even as the "Europeanization of American democracy".

A less ambitious conclusion -- one which is being freely drawn and will be of importance in the months to come -- would probably be a safer one. It is, that the public will not stand for price instability. Seemingly, the winning move in Mr. Truman's campaign was the calling of the extraordinary session of Congress; by means of it he palmed off, on the Republican majority, the unpopularity arising from high prices. The triumphant election of Mr. Chester Bowles in Connecticut is a pointer in the same direction. It is not, of course, for me, a foreigner, to draw the lesson of an American event too conclusively; but this explanation, if true, is highly relevant to European politics too, for it is being exploited over here by advocates of governmental price controls.

Even before the American election, and at a time when nobody questioned Mr. Dewey's expected victory, British Conservatives had, within my hearing, animadverted on the dangers of the French political situation and on the fragility of the Italian. These were in large measure ascribed to the incapacity of the French and Italian governments to keep prices under control. The certainty now grows that, if prices are not kept steady, there is nothing which will avert popular discontent. This fact had always been known, but its political importance is now seen to be greater than had been commonly thought. And the position of those who would put their trust in the price mechanism to restore economic equilibrium is correspondingly weakened. In France herself, indeed, where the bias of the Government is markedly in favor of economic liberalism, the restoration of price controls tends, notwithstanding, to make visible progress.

This is an important development, which justifies me, I hope, in dwelling so much on the American election.

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The foreign correspondents in France, wearied perhaps by the disappointment of successive hopes placed in a whole succession of politicians, were from the start "bearish" about M. Queuille's chances.

True it is that this country doctor, with a long political and ministerial career behind him, had no sensational achievements to his credit; therefore his name lacked glamor, in addition to being difficult for American radio artists.

In boldness of conception Reynaud is his superior; in eloquence, Herriot; in aristocratic distinction, Blum. Queuille has not been at pains to build himself up for public consumption; he has not made into a byword the integrity of his character and the pains which he takes; as Poincare saw to it that they should be for him. With Queuille, personal traits are not a byword but a fact.

From being a good doctor in a small way, Queuille became a good administrator in minor offices. As a representative he was painstaking in the extreme, as a party man moderate but faithful, as Minister of Agriculture -- a post which he filled twenty times during the Third Republic -- excellent but unassuming. He is small in size, mild in manner, staunch but not unyielding in his views. He made an adventurous escape to London from occupied France, and at a later date was second man to de Gaulle in the Algiers government. While in private he stood up to the General, he never made their differences public so long as the war lasted, and no whisper of their disagreements ever reached France. While he was in Algiers, Queuille, though Vice-President of the Council, was under a police protection somewhat too complete for his taste.

As a moderate, Queuille, in the violent first phases of the new Republic, did not suit the temper of the times, and wisely held aloof. He is now in the saddle.

So great are the difficulties of his task -- a fight on two fronts with a heterogeneous majority supporting him -- that I should not care to predict for his government a long life. But this I will say -- that he is a good man. His patience, modesty and skill in conciliation, learned in the exacting school of provincial politics, combine happily with the forcefulness of M. Moch, his Minister of the Interior. On the coal strike they did a good combined job; they waited long enough to act till public opinion was on their side, and then struck with vigor.

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France would have been spared this crisis had not the miners' union (Federation of Underground Workers) been delivered into the hands of the Communists at the Liberation -- an item in the story of the conquest of unions by the Communists.

For fifteen years after their separation from the Socialists, the Communists, being unable to gain control of existing unions, ran their own. These, which were weak in numbers, were federated in the so-called Unitarian Federation of Labor (CGTU) and stood in opposition to the well entrenched and much stronger CGT. Later when Stalin pressed upon them the project of the Grand Alliance known as the Popular Front, the Communists offered to unite their unions with the larger ones. The proposal looked harmless enough, seeing that the Communists were in a minority.

But the last act was still to be played. During the Occupation the Communists went underground. Of the moderate union leaders, some gave up their union activities while others strove, under most adverse conditions, to get on with the job. Each of these two contrasting behaviors gave the Communists a handle: with the first group they traded on a comradeship in arms, the second they branded as traitors -- or threatened to brand as traitors if they did not fall in with Communist wishes. The threat was real enough, for some were imprisoned and others, including two miners' leaders, were shot out of hand. This combination of purge and blackmail enabled the Communists to rid the revived unions of the presence of many trusted leaders who were opposed to them.

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Though run at first by a junta of Communists and non-Communists, the unions soon became a Communist preserve. So much was this the case that the only alternative left to those who refused to follow Communist orders was to break away.

In this way the wheel came round to the old position: two sets of unions, the Communist and the Socialist -- but with this difference that, whereas formerly the Communists had been in the cold shades of minority unions, they now possessed the central organization in Rue Lafayette, and the big unions: it was now the turn of the others to be out in the cold with the small unions. The Force Ouvriere, the non-Communist organization over which Jouhaux, the dethroned king of the CGT, presides, is and remains very weak, even though it has the full backing of M. Lacoste, the Minister of Production, formerly Secretary of the Civil Servants' Union.

In the mines, for instance, the elections for security delegates showed that Force Ouvriere controlled only 14 per cent of the miners' votes as against over 80 per cent for the Communist-dominated union. (I have omitted mention of the Christian Unions because their history is separate from the CGT-CGTU imbroglio. Mostly they are very weak, and in the election referred to polled only 2 per cent.)

The recent conference of the now Communist-dominated CGT showed the Stalinian leaders determined, now that the "reformists" had broken away, to bring what was left of the old union bodyguard into complete submission. Not all the non-Communists have left, but those who have stayed, weakened as they are by the departure of their fellows, are in a sad way. The feeling is thrust on them that their chances of survival depend on a slavish adherence to the party line, and it is, of course, better from the point of view of the Communists that Moscow's instructions should be given through non-Communist mouthpieces.

Thus, it was a former associate of Jouhaux -- de Deap -- who was chosen to denounce at the CGT conference the vassalization of France by the U. S. A. and the projected utilization of the French as cannon fodder for American capitalism!

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With such an object lesson, of the consequences of letting the Communists share in the administration of the unions, it is small wonder that the British unions are starting to worry about Communist progress in their own ranks.

Two events have stirred British Labor leaders. The first was Arthur Horner's bold declaration in France that British miners wholeheartedly sided with the French miners. The Secretary of the Miners' Federation is a Communist, "and proud to be" (so he told me), but he also says -- "as secretary of the miners, I am just secretary of the miners". Did he in this instance use his position as secretary of the miners to further Communist policy? He did, and so the council of the Federation found, when they censured him severely. But he still retains his post -- and that is the only point of interest to the Communist Party.

Communists control few of the English union federations, but one of them is the Electrical Trades Union -- and there, as Chris Blackwell discovered in Manchester, non-Communists have a thin time. A local Labor leader of some eminence, he was, for some technical fault or other, expelled from the union. Along with some previous victims, he then staged an open-air meeting on a bombed-out site in the heart of Manchester, at which they demanded a purge of Communists from the unions.

But the big Labor bosses are disinclined to worry: "Haven't we taught a lesson to Horner? Haven't we made him eat humble pie?" They seem to think that makes some difference!

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Mr. Hoffman is reported to have praised the advances made by British industry. It is to that country's credit that its mood is not one of self-congratulation but of sober self-criticism. A statistical analysis seems to show that "the upward

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momentum of production as a whole has been mostly if not entirely lost". Thus says the financial editor of the Times, who sees the general trend "flattening out".

Observers must take stock of this phenomenon. It is not disputed that national consumption in England is, as a whole, below the pre-war level, and it is claimed by the Labor Government that the condition of the working classes has improved. The conclusion is that the whole burden of the sacrifice in consumption has been borne by the middle and upper classes.

It can be argued that preservation of national unity made it desirable to put the burden of sacrifice on the classes best able to bear it materially, best equipped intellectually to understand the need for sacrifice, and best prepared morally to suffer from it. That is, in all probability, true, and in that respect the British way has been better than the French way.

But the time will come when even the high-minded British middle class may chafe under its sacrifices, no relief from which is yet in sight. The question is not so much: "When shall we be able to raise our standard of life?" as "When shall we be able to maintain the present standard without American help?" It is thus of prime importance to consider what further improvement of production is possible. It is useless to rely on exhortation.

A committee of enquiry into the cost of housebuilding, appointed by Mr. Bevan, gives part of the answer. "The present policy of full employment has removed the chief incentives to good output which existed before the war: the fear of being out of a job and of losing income." What this "negative" incentive did before must be done now, the committee feels, by "positive incentives -- rewards, rather than penalties". Thoughts are moving in the direction of the "profit motive" for Labor. It will be queer indeed to have two different sets of motives operating simultaneously on two different levels of income.

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Elections to the upper -- and weaker -- House took place in France on the 7th of November, resulting in a collapse of Communist representation. From 30 per cent of the seats, they have fallen to 6 per cent. This is due mostly to the return from proportional representation, adopted at the Liberation, to the absolute majority made of choice.

The other feature of this election is the great power of the Gaullists, who claim that 123 out of 264 councillors elected up to this time are committed, in writing, to follow the General's lead. This is less meaningful than it seems at first. The situation can be analyzed in two distinct phenomena. Firstly, there is an increase in the strength of the Right. Secondly, the Right has committed itself to the leadership of the General. But there is here no clear indication that the RPF has bitten deeply into the walls of the Left.

The main lesson of the Gaullist success is addressed to the MRP which has slumped almost out of existence. It testifies that the electors were tired of the ineffectual half-way collectivism of the Christian Socialists. In short this election points to a restoration of the pre-war pattern of French politics. The Right commanding less than half the votes, the remainder split between the Radicals (bearing the misleading name of Radical Socialists, while they are the party of individual rights), the Socialists and the Communists.

This is a familiar pattern. It has its inherent difficulties, which are very much heightened by the consolidation of the Right, and the strengthening of the Left. So this return to pre-war pattern makes it more urgent than ever to break up Communism and to break down the Rightist bloc. The two tasks do not seem impossible.

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